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Age a Key Factor in Comparing Religiousness of Men and Women

Older women are far more likely than older men to describe themselves as very religious, but younger men and women under 30 give about equal assessments of their level of religiousness.

This finding emerges from a Gallup survey conducted for Times Mirror.

This question was asked:

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 represents a description that is perfect for you, and 1 a description that is totally wrong for you, how well does the term, a religious person, *describe you?*

One-third (32%) of older women, 50 and over, rate themselves a "10," twice the proportion of older men (17%) who do so.

However, the 11% of younger women under 30 who choose "10" is statistically matched by the percentage of men who do so.

Other highlights of the survey are:

- The percentage giving a "10" — that is, say that "a religious person" is a perfect description for themselves — increases steadily with age. Persons 60 years of age and older are three times as likely as those 18 to 24 to select a "10" on the scale.
- More than four in 10 (44%) Black Protestant evangelicals pick the top position on the scale.
- Three in 10 (31%) of those who are widowed choose a "10."

Here are the full results in tabular form:

'A Religious Person' — A Perfect Description
(Choosing 10 on a 10-point scale)

NATIONAL	18%
Men	14
Women	22
18-24 years	9%
25-29 years	12
30-39 years	14
40-49 years	19
50-59 years	23
60 and over	27
College grad.	17
Other college	18
H.S. grad.	15
Less than H.S. grad.	23
Race/ethnicity	
White Protestant	19
White ethnic Catholic	15
White non-ethnic Catholic	14
Jewish	13
Black	26
Hispanic	13
Religion	
White Protestant evangelical	35
White Protestant non-evangelical	8
Black Protestant evangelical	44
Black Protestant non-evangelical	13
Catholic	15
Other	30
None	5
Marital Status	
Married	18
Single	11
Separated/divorced	20
Widowed	31

And here are the results based on age and sex:

	Men	Women
	%	%
18-29 years	10	11
30-49 years	13	19
50 and older	17	32

More Today Than in 1985 Say Premarital Sex is Wrong

Evidence that the sexual revolution of the last quarter-century may be coming to a halt is seen in a recent Gallup survey which shows a reversal in the dramatic trend since 1969 toward acceptance of premarital sex.

Between 1969 and 1985 the percentage of Americans who viewed premarital sex as wrong dropped a remarkable 29 percentage points, from 68% in the earlier survey to 39% in 1985. In the current survey, however, opposition has grown, with 46% now saying sex before marriage is wrong and about the same percentage, 48%, believing it is not wrong.

A key factor in this trend reversal may be growing concern over the risk of disease (such as herpes, AIDS, etc.), which is cited by one-fifth of those in the survey who believe premarital sex to be wrong. Given most often as reasons are moral or religious reasons (named by 83%). These are followed by risk of disease (20%), risk of pregnancy (13%), and the opinion that women should be virgins before marriage (9%).

Following is the question asked and the trend:

There's a lot of discussion about the way morals and sexual attitudes are changing in this country. What is your opinion about this: Do you think it is wrong for a man and a woman to have sex relations before marriage, or not?

Premarital Sex

	Wrong	Not wrong	No opinion
	%	%	%
1987	46	48	6
1985	39	52	9
1973	48	43	9
1969	68	21	11

Women and older persons are more inclined than men and younger persons to say sex before marriage is wrong. Little difference in views is found by racial background.

Catholics today take a considerably more liberal view than do Protestants, although in 1969, when the first survey was taken, Catholics and Protestants held closely similar views.

The following table compares the latest results with those recorded in 1985 (low point in trend of those saying "wrong") and in 1969 (high point):

Premarital Sex
(Percent saying "wrong")

	1987	1985	1969
	%	%	%
NATIONAL	46	39	68
Men	39	32	62
Women	53	44	74
18-29 years	27	18	49
30-49 years	41	35	67
50 & older	65	56	80
Protestants	52	46	70
Catholics	39	33	72
College education	40	31	56
High school	42	40	69
Grade school	60	60	77
East	37	40	65
Midwest	42	36	69
South	61	48	78
West	40	24	55

The latest findings are based on in-person interviews with 1,607 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation during the period July 10-13.

For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects should not exceed 3 percentage points in either direction. In addition to sampling error, the reader should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls. *This report conforms to the standards of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

Financial Insecurity Dominates Americans' Family Worries

Financial insecurity remains the chief threat to American family life, with over half (56%) citing economic problems as their biggest personal concern.

The leading cause of financial concern is inadequate family resources (30%), followed by the high cost of living (11%), unemployment (6%), taxes (5%), and the safety of their investments (4%). Financial problems worry more women (61%) than men (51%).

Topping the list of Americans' non-economic concerns are illness and health care (6%), marital discord and family well-being (5%), education (3%), fear of war (3%), dissatisfaction with government (3%), old age and social security (3%). Various other problems are mentioned by 8% while 16% say they have no major problems.

Despite increasing attention to social ills that threaten family life, such as drugs and divorce, economic difficulties concern Americans about as much today as they did 20 years ago. In 1967, 60% cited money problems as their primary worry; 10 years ago the figure stood at 61%. Similarly, worries about education, personal family problems and health have not changed significantly during the last two decades.

Following is the question asked and a comparison of the 1987 and 1977 findings:

What do you regard as the biggest problem facing you and your family?

Biggest Problem Facing Family

	1987	1977
Economic problems - total	56%	61%
Health problems, care	6	5
Divorce, family well-being	5	4
Education	3	3
Dissatisfaction with government	3	*
Fear of war	3	*
Old age, social security	3	2
No problems	16	21
All others	8	11
No opinion	8	8
	111%	115%

Note: Totals exceed 100% due to multiple responses.
*Less than 1%.

The latest findings are based on telephone interviews with 1,009 adults, 18 and older, conducted in scientifically selected localities across the nation during the period Aug. 24-Sept. 2.

Four Reasons Why You Should Order *RELIGION IN AMERICA '87*

1. Religion in America, 1987 is an invaluable source of information on religious beliefs and practices in the U.S., much of which is not available elsewhere.
2. It provides national and regional norms against which the clergy can match their own churches or snyagogues in terms of religious belief, practice, knowledge and stewardship.
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   What are the new religious interests of church members and non-members?
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Public Supports Constitution's Principles But Many See Need for Improvements

The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Constitution comes at a time when a majority of Americans believe the document to be basically sound and, at the same time, overwhelmingly endorse the key "separation of powers" provision.

On the other hand, as many as 44% believe the Constitution is in need of some basic changes or amendments, although the public convincingly rejects a constitutional convention as the vehicle to bring about these changes.

Amending the Constitution

Article V of the Constitution provides two mechanisms for amendments. The first requires a proposed amendment to gain approval of both houses of Congress. The approved amendment then must be ratified by at least three-fourths of the states. A second requires Congress to call a constitutional convention when requested by two-thirds of the states. Any changes passed by such a convention would then need to be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

Although all 26 amendments were proposed in Congress, the prospect for the first constitutional convention since 1787 is only two states away from approval, having obtained applications from 32 of the necessary 34 states.

Following are the questions asked and the key findings:

Do you believe that after 200 years the Constitution is still basically sound and meets the needs of our country, or do you think the Constitution is in need of some basic changes or amendments?

Current Validity of Constitution

Still meets nation's needs	53%
Needs basic changes	44
No opinion	3
	100%

Assessments of whether or not the Constitution is still able to meet the country's needs vary significantly by education, age and race. About seven college graduates in 10 (72%) say the Constitution can still meet the needs of the country while only 48% of those without a college degree give this response. Among respondents 30 and older, 56% feel the Constitution is still sound, while 42% of those under 30 concur. Whites (55%) are substantially more likely than non-whites (36%) to feel the Constitution is basically sound. Public opinion on the other questions is less affected by demographic background.

Some people say that splitting the power of government among the administrative, legislative, and judicial branches is a good idea because it keeps any one branch of government from becoming too powerful. Others say such checks and balances are a bad idea because they get in the way of efficient government. Which comes closer to your view?

Separation of Powers

Good idea	73%
Bad idea	19
No opinion	8
	100%

Do you believe we need a national convention to make basic changes or amendments to the Constitution, or do you think such a convention might make too many changes in the Constitution and leave things worse than before?

Constitutional Convention

Needed to make changes	21%
Might make things worse	72
No opinion	7
	100%

The findings are based on telephone interviews with 812 adults, 18 and older, conducted for NEWSWEEK by The Gallup Organization in selected localities across the nation during May 6-7.

Teen Churchgoing Has Changed Little Over Decade, 1977-1987

Churchgoing among the nation's teenagers has remained fairly level over the last ten years, varying by only two or three percentage points from year to year.

In the latest (1987) audit, based on interviews with 1,518 teenagers during the year, 52% attended church (or synagogue) in a typical week. Last year's figure was statistically about the same, 49%.

Churchgoing among adults has also been fairly flat over the last decade, although fewer adults than teens attend in a typical week. The following table compares the trend among teens and adults for the period 1977-1987. Figures for adults are based on multiple surveys during the year, as is the case with many of the annual percentages for teenagers.

Here is the question:

Did you happen to attend church or synagogue in the last 7 days?

Church/Synagogue Attendance In Average Week

	Teens	Adults
	%	%
1987	52	40*
1986	49	40
1985	53	42
1984	51	40
1981	49	41
1980	50	40
1979	47	40
1978	50	41
1977	47	41
10-year average:	50%	41%

*Based on 3 national surveys to date. Final 1987 figures will be reported in December.

(Note: Percentages for adults for the years 1983 and 1982 are 40% and 41% respectively.)

4 in 10 Attend Church Every Week Or Almost Every Week

Four in 10 U.S. adults attend church or synagogue "every week" or "almost every week," while 15% never attend.

These findings emerge from a massive national sample of 4,244 adults, 18 and older, in a survey conducted for Times Mirror by The Gallup Organization, Inc., during the period April 25-May 10.

The results of the question (which focused on the *frequency* of attendance) reveals that 26% attend church or synagogue every week during the year, while another 14% say almost every week. One in seven (14%) say "once or twice a month," while 30% report "a few times a year."

The following question was asked in the survey:

Do you go to (church/synagogue) every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?

Here are the highlights from a demographic analysis of the frequency of churchgoing:

- Young married people under 40 with children are twice as likely as those couples without children to attend church. Twenty-seven percent of the former and 15% of the latter say they attend every week, clearly pointing to the fact that the religious education of children brings their parents back to church.
- As high a proportion of 40% of women, 50 years and older, attend church every week of the year.
- Less than one percent of Black Protestant evangelicals say they "never" attend church.
- One-third (32%) of persons with no religious affiliation report they attend church once or twice a month or more often. Six in 10 (61%) never go.
- One-fourth of Jews (24%) indicate they never attend synagogue, while only 8% go on a weekly basis.

New Book Paints Surprising Portrait of American Catholics

- Catholics say by a 3 to 1 margin that "divorced Catholics should be allowed to remain in the Church."
- Support for a married priesthood is quite strong among Catholics (who accept it by a 2-to-1 margin).
- While Catholics are "conservative" on some key social issues, they clearly come down on the "liberal" side of other key social issues — most notably women's rights, gun control, and civil rights for minorities and homosexuals.

These are among the provocative findings in *The American Catholic People*, written by George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli and published by Doubleday. Drawn from The Gallup Organization's data base, the book provides eye-opening insights into the 28% of American adults who identify themselves as Catholics

Who are the American Catholics? Twenty-nine percent are under the age of 30; 16% are Hispanic, while 3% are black and another 3% classify themselves as non-white. Sixty-eight percent are parents; three out of four live in urban areas; and 55% identify themselves as politically right-of-center.

Gallup and Castelli compare this growing and increasingly influential population to the Protestant majority on a number of vital issues. They find that Catholics are more liberal than Protestants in their stance on the cutting of the defense budget and on the allocation of funds for social programs. Catholics will also be a major force for reduced military spending, moderation in foreign policy, and progress in the control of nuclear arms.

The American Catholic People: Their Beliefs, Practices, and Values. George Gallup, Jr. & Jim Castelli. February 20, 1987. $15.95 (Hardcover). Doubleday and Company, Inc., 245 Park Ave., New York, NY 10167. Contact: Diane Speicher (212) 984-7096

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PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER
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Princeton, New Jersey 08542

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